

Applicant : JOHN F. T. CONROY, M.E. POWER,
AND P. M. NORRIS
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REMARKS

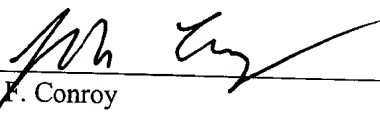
Claims 1-36 are pending, claims 26-36 having been added by way of the present Preliminary Amendment.

New claims 31-35 are supported by, e.g., FIG. 2 and the written description thereof. New claims 28 and 29 and amended claims 13-15 and 17 recite hydroxy metallates as supported by, e.g., page 7, col. 16.

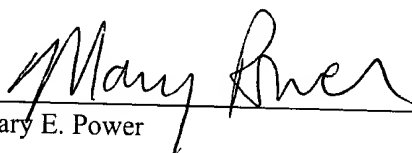
Applicant asks that all claims be examined.

Respectfully submitted,

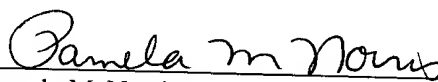
Date: 10/11/2001


John F. Conroy

Date: 10/4/2001


Mary E. Power

Date: 10/4/2001


Pamela M. Norris

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Version with markings to show changes made

In the Claims:

Claims 12, 13-15, 17-18, 22, and 24-25 have been amended as follows:

12. (Amended) A method comprising:
providing a sol solution having less than 29 mole % organic solvents to make said sol compatible with a [biological material] cell; and
immobilizing said [biological material] cell by mixing said [biological material] cell into said sol.

13. (Amended) A method comprising:
[hydrolyzing a sol-gel precursor in water to form] forming a sol containing a hydroxy metallate and an organic solvent;
mixing [said] a biological material with said sol; and
mixing a sufficient amount of a dispersant into said sol to cause macropores in a gel formed by said sol.

14. (Amended) A sol, comprising:
[a species formed by the hydrolysis of] P moles of a [sol-gel precursor] hydroxy metallate;
a sol solution including 71 mole % or more water and 29 mole % or less organic solvents;
and
a biological material,
wherein said sol solution is compatible with said biological material.

15. (Amended) A sol, comprising:

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[a species formed by the hydrolysis of] P moles of a [sol-gel precursor] hydroxy metallate;

W moles of water;

a sufficient amount of a dispersant to cause macropores in a gel formed by said sol; and
a biological material.

17. (Amended) The sol according to claim 15, wherein:

said hydroxy metallate is formed by hydrolysis of a sol-gel precursor; and

a [hydrolysis] ratio of W:P is greater than 25:1.

18. (Amended) The sol according to claim [15] 17, wherein said sol-gel precursor
comprises an alkoxy metallate.

22. (Amended) The sol according to claim 21, further comprising [a nutrient supply]
nutrients configured to support said biological cell.

24. (Amended) The sol according to claim [15] 17, further comprising an organic solvent [wherein said organic solvents comprise] comprising an organic by-product arising from
[a production] the hydrolysis of said sol-gel precursor.

25. (Amended) The sol according to claim 15, wherein a [hydrolysis] ratio of W:P is
greater than 100:1.

New claims 26-36 have been added.